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(pronounced Wiley) Blount, and Jackson's law partner and life friend was John (not Thomas) Overton. But the portraiture is essentially consistent from first to last, and so we feel is really truthful. Obvious imperfections and infirmities are even emphasized because they leave Jackson all the more life-like, and display his real greatness despite these and with these.

The readableness, enjoyment and instructiveness, of the volumes admit of no doubt, and there can be as little that they will take high rank as a frank interpretation of human nature and of genuine character, by one who knew men and judged men by broad standards. As a notable Tennessean of the fifty years following Jackson, has said: "Taking the century from 1750 to 1850 Andrew Jackson is more completely and eminently the type and representative of the genuine American man at his best and, in some respects, at his worst, than any other man in our History."

THE LETTERS OF AN ENGLISH LIBERAL

LETTERS OF LORD ACTON TO MARY GLADSTONE. Edited, with an introductory Memoir, by Herbert Paul. With two plates. New York: The Macmillan Co.

Mr. Morley's notable "Life of Gladstone" has made all relations with him and any new light thrown upon him a matter of more than ordinary moment. The letters of Lord Acton to Gladstone's daughter possess, indeed, this interest, but it is only a secondary one. Nor even is the fact that the striking Cambridge Modern History, now in course of realization, was planned by Lord Acton, the justification for publishing his letters. Both of these circumstances may add to the timeliness of the publication; but it would be eminently unfair to Lord Acton's rich and remarkable personality to have any one but himself the cause. His own great knowledge, and clear grasp of men and things, his striking opinions on current issues of life and the day, are sufficient reward. These opinions, besides revealing a rarely sympathetic and highly cultivated mind, show a burning zeal for truth and liberty. They consist of political issues, historical questions, theological speculations, the content of old and new

books, the personality of public men—matters intellectual, spiritual and social, always elevated and serene.

Lord Acton's was an interesting, indeed, in many ways a unique personality. A practical minded Englishman and a Roman Catholic, a liberal and even independent thinker, he was opposed by the very necessity of his intellectual make-up, to Ultramontaniam and extreme conservatism in thought, whether in State, or in Church. Naturally a Liberal in politics, with high ideals as to certain principles, he was both intellectually and spiritually sympathetic with and akin to Mr. Gladstone and the latter's policies. He was noted for his prudence and his wisdom, his extensive knowledge of the foreign languages and his wide reading, his great sociability and personal acquaintance with the best minds in public, social, and scholarly life in England and on the Continent.

The biographical sketch of Mr. Paul is interpretative of the letters which follow, and after reading these letters one is apt to come back to Mr. Paul's essay to note definite points of characterization. It is high company that one has been keeping. Lord Acton's mind was of an intellectual and highly cultivated type, which glowed with an ardor for liberality and liberty and strength of principle beyond all petty considerations and meanesses. His intimacy with the Gladstone family was a natural outcome of his sincere interest in the problems of Liberal politics and natural affinity with a man of Gladstone's temper. The letter's addressed to Mary Gladstone, the daughter, during the period of her father's ministry in the early eighties (the letters really date from 1879 to 1886) rather than to the busy statesman, were meant largely for family consumption. They were at the same time personal, too, full of helpful comment from one far away—many are written from the Riviera—who, on the outside, yet with an intimate knowledge, had the faculty of looking objectively, calmly, sanely, wisely, at things. His views frankly expressed on many subjects of intimate conversation, sometimes on delicate points in the Gladstone administration, his doubts about and wishes for the Irish, his zeal for movements often unpopular, his tact and worldly wisdom and little hints as to social procedure, his encouragement and applause in the

highest sense of right and justice—all must have stimulated the family's life and thought and aspiration. The correspondence must have been helpful to him as well—his being a surcharged mind, ready to pour out its convictions and emotions upon occasion. A distinct glow is imparted to many of the letters, an intellectual fervor, a spiritual heat.

The topics, as will be expected, are varied. The richness of mind came from long and omniverous reading and thinking and personal mingling with the best in Europe. He knew personally all the noted men of intellect and letters and statecraft, and judged them personally. Among these men those intellectually closest seem to have been Dr. Döllinger, the liberal theologian, and Mr. Gladstone, the liberal statesman, and he naturally strove to bring about their meeting. As a Roman Catholic many of his opinions of vexatious points in Church history and polity are of the highest interest. He distrusted D'Israeli fundamentally, and so frankly disapproved of Gladstone's eulogy on the occasion of his great opponent's death. If we could not lend the seal of our approval to D'Israeli living, why to D'Israeli dead?—was his rigid reasoning. The period of these letters includes also the deaths of George Eliot and Carlyle. He is always enthusiastic over George Eliot as a kindred intellectual and moral force, and seems to think his correspondent is not sufficiently so. On the other hand he has but a small opinion of Carlyle: he had read Coleridge first and Carlyle had no message for him. "John Inglesant" was a book to interest him greatly and to incite criticism, as doubtless some of Mrs. Ward's work must have done later. One of his pet dislikes was Jowett, Master of Balliol.

Lord Acton was sincere and intense, a high-minded partisan on principle, but with a mind open to all impressions which might lead to a perception of the truth. His own book, never to be written, to which he jocularly refers repeatedly as his masterpiece-to-be which the world is waiting and anxious for, and imaginary quotations and extracts of which he often obtrudes, is on "Liberty." This word with its connotation of ideas may be accepted as containing the fundamental principle of his thought and life. He might have made a great philosophical historian; but men of his stamp not infrequently acquire and seldom write

—they rather pour themselves forth in monologues like Coleridge, or in letters, as here.

NEW VOLUMES OF STANDARD POETRY

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF EDMUND SPENSER. With an Introduction by William P. Trent, of Columbia University, and Life by J. Walker McSpadden. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.

BRITISH POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. Selections from Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Landor, Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Clough, Arnold, Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne. Edited with reference lists and notes by Curtis Hidden Page. Boston: Benj. H. Sanborn & Co.

THE GREEK POETS. AN ANTHOLOGY. By Nathan Haskell Dole. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.

THE POEMS OF WILLIAM MORRIS. Selected and edited by Percy Robert Colwell. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.

Whether this be a poetically gifted age or not, it is an age, at least outwardly, very much interested in the study of poetry. How far this interest is genuine and is continued beyond the school and college days, may be debated; but a scanty examination of catalogues shows that poetry and the poets unquestionably constitute the great body of literary study in our college and university courses. We are at least critical, and should be appreciative, of poetical talent; and perhaps as a result, a generation may arise to produce a high order of poetry, unless our interest after all prove to be but an affectation on the part of the teacher, and mere questioning amiability on the part of the pupil. Certainly one might argue that this interest was real from the number of volumes of and about poetry issued from the press for class use, reference, special work, and personal enjoyment. Even our local newspapers fill part of a column in every issue with "Poems You Should Know."

All four of the volumes noted above, are intended as convenient and moderately priced editions for the use of the student lover. Professor Trent's introduction to the works of Spenser, constituting a critical summary, is a fresh contribution and estimate of the meaning and importance of Spenser's poetry to us, in spite of recognized drawbacks, and the study contains some